



CROSS CONNECTIONS

May
2022

On the afternoon of April 24 just over 100 members and friends of FPCS gathered in the fellowship hall to pack meals for Ukrainian refugees. We exceeded our goals both in numbers of volunteers and numbers of meals packed. There was so much life and love in the room. With smiles on their faces, people of all ages worked long past the point of weariness. It was a wonder to behold.

While taking a break from other tasks, many of the children decorated the shipping boxes. Those signs of life will bless whoever opens the containers. In case you cannot make out the writing in the accompanying photograph, written on that box are the words: "Sometimes all you need is hope."

As I write this final newsletter note, I am struck by how much the world needs the sturdy hope that Christ's Church has to offer. For Christian hope is not naïve optimism. It is realistic about the power of sin in every facet of human endeavor; it does not deny the reality of suffering or death. But fundamental to our faith is the promise that death does not have the last word—that God's love is stronger. And in our small, everyday choices, we have the chance to contribute to love's ultimate triumph. We need only let the Spirit breathe through us.

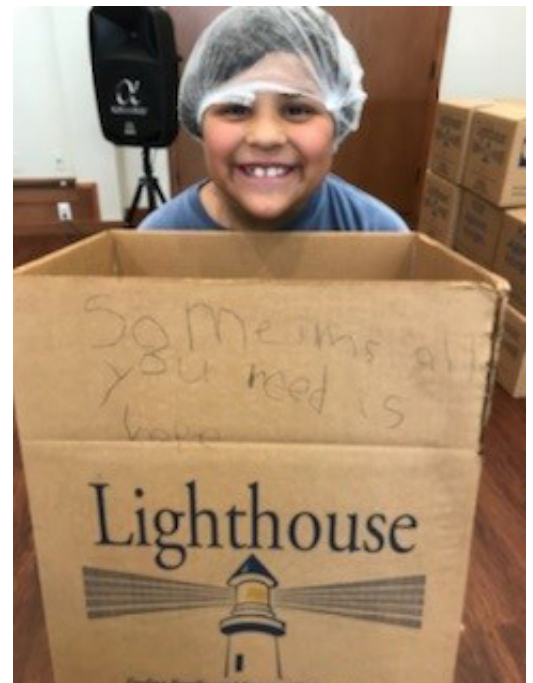
It has been such a privilege to share these last twenty months with you. I know that the welcome you extended to Lee and to me, you also will extend to Craig and Donna as they come to worship and serve with you. God is good. We will be praying for you and eager to see just what form God's provision and invitation to ministry takes in this place.

With deep and abiding hope,

Margaret

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

-Romans 15:13



• **The Rev. Craig Miller
to Serve as Bridge Pastor**



Upon completion of Margaret's interim call at the end of May, the session is pleased to announce that we have contracted with the Reverend Craig Miller to serve as a short-term Bridge Pastor until our new Pastor / Head of Staff is called. This action has been approved by the

Committee on Ministry (COM) of Peace River Presbytery. His service with our congregation will begin on June 1, 2022.

Reverend Miller did not seek this position; he was referred by a church member and friends of the church. He thought he was ready to "just enjoy retirement" but as we talked and prayed, we all agreed that the Holy Spirit is at work. We are sad that Margaret cannot stay, but we are excited to welcome Craig and his wife, Donna.

Craig obtained a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and recently retired after more than 20 years of full-time ministry serving churches in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Florida. He is currently a member of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay and served Forest Hills Presbyterian Church in Tampa for twelve years. His last call was as the Interim Pastor at Camp Hill Presbyterian in Camp Hill, PA. The Millers live in Sun City Center and attend Peace Presbyterian Church in Bradenton. They plan to seek a summer rental in Sarasota to reduce commuting and to be with us in the community. When offered the opportunity to work remotely, he declined, saying effective ministry with colleagues and congregants grows from relationships, and those are best nurtured in person.

We are so very grateful for Margaret's faithful service during this time. We ask for continued prayers for our congregation and for our Pastor Nominating Committee.

Your Bridge Pastor Search Team,
Dave Householder, Denise Landers, Carol Papa

• **Saying Goodbye to
Margaret LaMotte Torrence**

The work of an interim pastor has a beginning and an end, and Margaret's time with us is drawing to a close. **Her last Sunday will be May 22.** We will celebrate her ministry with one combined service at 10:00 a.m., followed by a reception. Margaret has requested that no love offering be taken; she would be delighted for any contributions in her honor to go to the FPC General Fund. Please note "in honor of Margaret" in the memo line.

• **New Adult Education Opportunity
Beginning Tuesday, May 17**



Only By God's Grace

As Christians, our worship, theology and way of life all emerge in response to the grace of God. The Church proclaims the grace of God; and as members of the body of Christ, we endeavor to share God's grace with others: by word and deed, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In this class we will explore what it means to live out the grace of God and perceive God's amazing grace around us. This class will be led by **Elaine Barnett** via Zoom and held **Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. beginning May 17.** Sign-up by using the Zoom link below:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlkceyurTMvGdE9j3A81zwCmiAadaaNgY-fl>

Lesson titles are:

May 17 The Bible Teaches About God's Grace

May 24 Grace through Christian History

May 31 Reformed Understanding of Grace

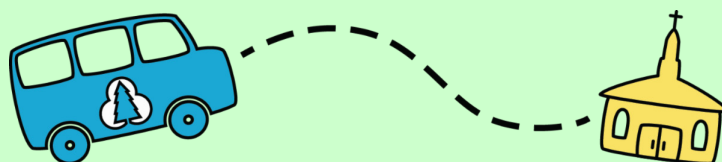
June 7 Gracious Lives of Others

June 14 Practicing God's Grace

June 21 God's Amazing Grace



Cedarkirk *A place apart to build up
the body of Christ in love.*
CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER



Traveling Day Camp

First Presbyterian Church is super excited to bring back FPC Day Camp in partner with Cedarkirk's Traveling Day Camp!

For those of you who are not familiar with Cedarkirk; Cedarkirk is our year round camp and conference center owned by the Presbyteries of Tampa Bay and Peace River. For more detailed information about Cedarkirk their website is <https://cedarkirk.org/>.

A few year's back Cedarkirk decided to bring their camp programs on the road to different Presbyterian Churches in the area. This is such a fun and amazing way to get the "overnight" camp experience but without spending the night.

These camps will range from age Pre-K to 5th grade with volunteer opportunities for middle and high school youth.

Be on the look out for registration and volunteer opportunities soon!

SAVE THE DATE!

FPC DAY CAMP is coming BACK!

JUNE 13- 17th, 2022

Please email Molly Horner, Children and Youth Coordinator,
mhorner@firstpressarasota.org with any questions.

• **Recommendations for Officer Candidates**

It is our privilege and responsibility as Presbyterians to elect our own leaders, and the Nominating Committee is organizing for the work of the coming year. They would like to know names of members whom you believe to be gifted for service as elders, deacons, or members of next year’s Nominating Committee.

Position descriptions and nominating forms are available in the entryway (along with a box for you to submit completed forms). The due date for submissions is **Sunday, May 8**. Please be in prayer for the committee as they undertake this work of discernment.

• **Get Easy Access to Church Member Photos and Contact Information**

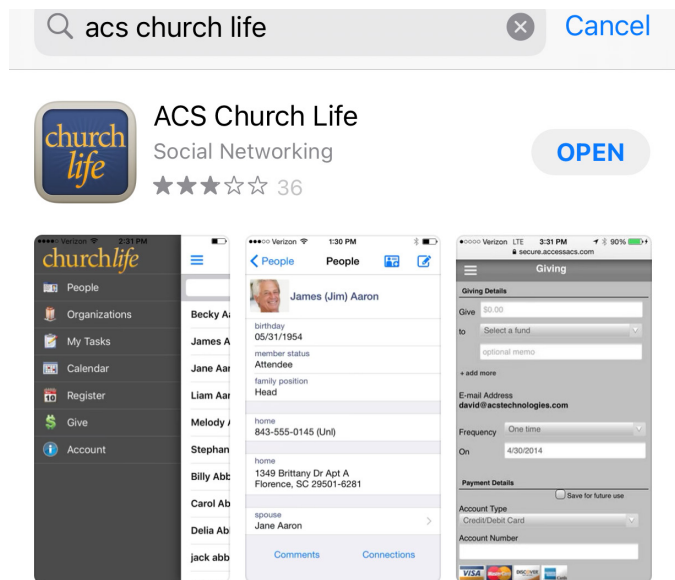


Church Life is an app that is available to church members with iPhones or Androids. You can search for members and view phone and address information, photos, and family members. You can send a text or call with a simple tap on the phone number. You can even send an email. Also, it is a quick way to give online.

Ready to go? Here are two simple steps:

1) Download ACS Church Life from your App Store using either iPhone or Android (Blackberry and other mobile devices can enter www.churchlife.mobi from any mobile browser).

2) Log in. Use the same username/email and password you use for your member login on our website.



You can bring your phone into the church office and Lisa Garcia, finance manager, would be happy to help you navigate getting Church Life on your phone. Please call (941) 955-8119 to set up a time.

Happening Soon at FPC Sarasota!

MAY 8 - Two services - 9 & 11 AM
PW Birthday Offering, Mother’s Day

MAY 15 – Two services - 9 & 11 AM

MAY 22 - ONE SERVICE - 10 AM
Margaret’s last Sunday, communion
Farewell reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall

MAY 29 - Two services - 9 & 11 AM
Guest preacher:
Rev. Carlos Emilio Ham from Cuba

JUNE 5 - Two services - 9 & 11 AM
Pentecost Sunday, communion;
bridge pastor begins



• **Social Justice Corner**

by Dorothy Murphy

This is What We Know

Because of the work of SURE, Sarasota has a successful juvenile civil citation program. In the last 12 months 83% of the children who previously would have been arrested, instead received a juvenile civil citation.

This is What We Want

We now need a similar program for adults. Civil citations are not a slap on the wrist. Adults who receive a civil citation will have to do community service, attend classes and pay restitution if necessary. However, they will not be branded for life with a criminal record. Civil citations allow people to make amends for mistakes and move on with their lives.

This is What was Accomplished at the 2021 Zoom Nehemiah Action

600 members of SURE came together via Zoom, and the Sarasota State Attorney and Sheriff committed to create an adult civil citation program.

This is the Good News

The good news is that a program has been drafted and it includes the misdemeanor driving offenses which we are most concerned about.

This is What SURE Stands Firm On

SURE's concern with the draft is the state attorney wants to charge people \$165 to participate in the adult civil citation program. This will significantly limit the ability of low-income people to take part. By comparison, in Pinellas County the adult civil citation program is free; in Hillsborough County the fee is \$50.

This is What SURE Decided to do Before the 2022 Nehemiah Action

On March 8, before the Nehemiah Action on April 5, SURE held a prayer vigil in front of the county jail. 31 SURE leaders and clergy attended. The event was covered by two media outlets.



FPC represented at the 2022 Nehemiah Action!

Nehemiah Action, April 5

At the Nehemiah Action in person at First Congregational Church and via Zoom, State Attorney Brodsky declined supporting a lesser fee for people to participate in the adult civil citation program. However, he did agree to further negotiations and SURE is pursuing this avenue with him. Stay tuned. as more information unfolds. Most of all, please be in prayer for these concerns.

We Look Forward to the Annual SURE Celebration on May 2

Plan to be a part of the annual SURE Celebration. We at First Presbyterian are happy to host the celebration on **Monday, May 2**, at 6:00 p.m. All SURE congregations are part of this event.

PEOPLE POWER NEEDED TO KEEP JUSTICE ROLLING!



This is what the Lord requires of us: To do justice, love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. - Micah 6:8

HOLY WEEK



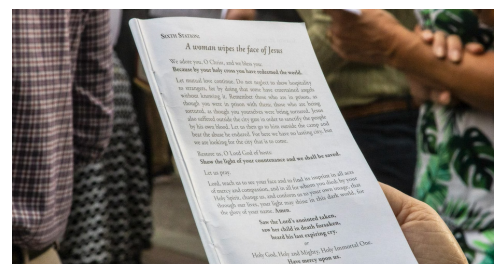
Palm Sunday Processional and Children's Moment



Maundy Thursday



Stations of the Cross
Downtown Sarasota



EASTER





• **Presbyterian Women**

The 2022-2023 PW/Horizons Bible study guide, “Celebrating the Sabbath,” by Carol M. Bechtel is now available to order. If you would like

one ordered for you and are not already on the list, please contact Flossie Paul at way2goflo@gmail.com. The study guide cost is \$10 and large print is \$15.

Birthday Offering

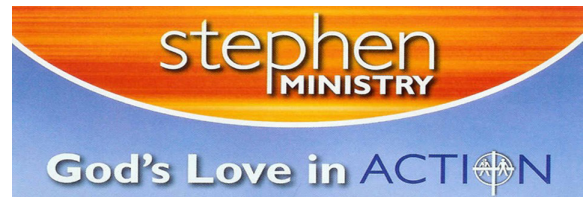
Presbyterian Women understands that scripture asks us to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. One way we do that is with the Birthday Offering. Received in the spring each year, it gives us a tangible way to celebrate the blessings in our lives. This year the Presbyterian Women Birthday Offering observes a century of generous giving totaling almost \$37 million to-date. Launched in 1922 to honor the 100th anniversary of the Woman’s Auxiliary in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the Birthday Offering is an annual tradition for givers and receivers around the world. Each year, the Birthday Offering awards grants to up to five programs. Primarily making possible capital improvement projects, this offering supports domestic and international ministries, focusing on areas such as agricultural development, child care, community organization, criminal justice, drug counseling, economic justice, elderly care, employment training, homelessness, literacy, violence or women’s concerns.

Donations for this year’s Birthday Offering can be mailed to or left in the church office. **Checks should be made out to Presbyterian Women with “Birthday Offering” in the memo line.** Also on **Sunday, May 8**, special envelopes will be included in your church bulletin and a collection table set up at the church entrances to receive your donation. For more information and a list of organizations receiving grants this year, go to presbyterianwomen.org/birthday.

Triennial Gathering

The Synod of South Atlantic (SOSA) Epworth PW Triennial Gathering is **Friday, October 21, through Sunday, October 23**. Located in St. Simons Island, GA, Epworth by the Sea is

a beautiful and peaceful retreat center. The gathering’s theme is “Plug In and Recharge.” There will be some exciting speakers, plenary leaders, and a special Saturday night guest, along with time for shopping, learning, worship, and fellowship. Our PW has funds available to cover the cost of transportation and registration fees as well as lodging and meals while at the event. If interested in attending, contact Pamela Lamb at (941) 210-7478. More information can be found at pwsosa.com.



Many people who are experiencing life difficulties won’t ask for help. They may be overwhelmed by grief or shock. Even worse, they may be in denial and do not want to admit that they are in a terrible place. It can be just as immobilizing for family and friends who are close to the hurting person, and sometimes made worse when the hurting person lashes out at the very family and friends who want to help.

These are just the type of situations that Stephen Ministry is prepared to handle. The First Presbyterian congregation has a group of dedicated and trained members who are available to be with those who are suffering a long-term crisis, loss, or terrible diagnosis. Stephen Ministry provides confidential, and ongoing companionship for those who may be suffering and for as long as they are needed.

Please don’t hesitate to investigate involving this caring service for your loved one or friend. If someone you know is hurting, find out if a referral to Stephen Ministry is appropriate. Please call the church office (941) 955-8119 to speak with Pastor Margaret LaMotte Torrence, Faith Community Nurse Cheryl Track, or Director of Music Ministries/Congregational Care Steven Phillips.



• **High Blood Pressure and Stroke**

*submitted by Cheryl Track,
Faith Community Nurse*

About 65 million Americans —1 in 3 adults— have high blood pressure. Of these, one third don't know they have it.

If you have high blood pressure your heart is pumping harder to move blood through the body. This can weaken blood vessels and damage major organs. Left untreated, it can lead to stroke, heart attack, or kidney failure. High blood pressure is called “the silent killer” because there are no signs or symptoms. Uncontrolled high blood pressure increases a person’s stroke risk by 4 to 6 times.

In most people, high blood pressure can be controlled through healthy habits and taking medicines—or a combination of both. Healthier choices can include a low-salt, low-fat diet, including exercise in your daily routine and if you drink alcohol, do so in moderation. If you are on medication, stay on it even when you feel fine. A blood pressure reading below 120/80 is considered normal.

If you have already had a stroke, lowering your blood pressure can reduce your risk of having another stroke. Other ways to reduce your risk of stroke include finding out whether you have atrial fibrillation, stopping smoking, finding out if you have high cholesterol, and, if diabetic, following recommendations to control your diabetes. Also exercise and enjoy a lower salt and lower fat diet.

Know the symptoms of stroke! When stroke hits, long - term disability can be significantly cut if you get medical care **FAST** (symptoms below).

Face droops on one side

Arms drift downward when raised

Speech is slurred

Time is critical; **CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY**

A severe headache with no known cause is another key warning sign of a stroke.

The GOOD NEWS is that up to 80% of strokes can be prevented by controlling risk factors! High blood pressure is the most common cause of stroke, so make sure to check your blood pressure at least yearly and follow up with your doctor.

Taken from the *National Stroke Association,*
www.stroke.org

• **Mark your calendar:**



Sunday, June 12, SunCoast Blood Mobile will be at First Presbyterian from 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Please contact **Cheryl Track**, faith community nurse,

to make an appointment, 4tracks@comcast.net, (941) 320-3828.

• **We're Here for You!**

The FPC care team, Stephen Ministers, deacons, elders and church staff continue to be available for you. Please feel free to reach out to Cheryl Track, Faith Community Nurse (941) 320-3828 or call the church office (941) 955-8119 if we can be of support to you.

• **Current COVID Guidelines On-Campus**

Due to the significant decline in COVID rates in our area, masks are now optional for worship and while in any buildings on campus for those who are fully vaccinated. Our session will continue to monitor COVID rates in our area.

• **Volunteer Day Trip to Beth-El Farmworker Ministry Sponsored by the Mission & Justice Committee**



NEXT TRIP:
Wednesday, May 25
Work at Beth-El:
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

You are invited to be a part of the group from First Presbyterian, Sarasota, that gathers at Beth-El Farmworker Ministry in Wimauma to volunteer sorting food or related activities on the last Wednesday of each month. This mission partner distributes food to help 600-900 folks each week, so a lot of help is needed.

To sign up or for more information, contact Dave Householder at dphouse47@gmail.com or call or text (724) 462-4235. Let us know of your interest in carpooling. Come and make a difference!

Invest in Children

by Jinny Miller, co-coordinator



Great News!

Congratulations! Brentwood Elementary School has named First Presbyterian Church as its Volunteer Organization of the Year! This honor, given annually, is because of your efforts to support Brentwood in so many ways this year—by volunteering in the school and on the Steering Committee, adopting classes, providing Christmas gift cards for Brentwood students and their families, supporting a “Welcome Back” brunch for the staff in August, and providing a “Morale Booster” for the staff in the spring. Your support has been noticed. You are appreciated!

The Sarasota County School District invited Jinny and Ron Miller, coordinators of the Invest in Children initiative, to represent FPC at a lovely event on April 27 for all the “winners” from schools in the district. Jinny and Ron send thanks to each of you who supported Brentwood with your time, talents and love this year.



• Recognition of Graduates

Parents, grandparents, and students, please email Molly Horner mhorner@firstpressarasota.org, Children and Youth Coordinator, with the name of your graduate, school graduating from, type of degree obtained, and a brief description of future plans (i.e., entering [name of college] in the fall), by Sunday, May 8. We would welcome news of impending graduations from high school, college, technical training programs or graduate schools. There is so much to celebrate!

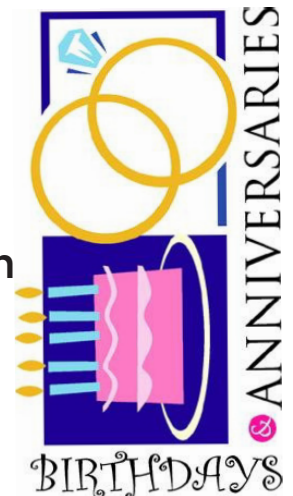
• **Birthdays**

1	Pam Harding	18	Beth Ann McFadyen-Boyer	29	Jane Minton
	Sean Boudarga		David Lalmond		Terri Runk
2	Jay Swick		Sara Miller	30	Matthew Eastmoore
	Keysha Rivera	19	Valerie Schaub		Marshall Eastmoore
3	Charlotte Davis-Friedman		Cynthia Widman		Ellen Forbes
	Gunther Lahm		Emily Weitekamp		Michelle Messick
4	Bill Racine		Chloe Alsum	31	Ron Saba, Jr.
5	David Landers	20	Clare Carter		Mark Saba
6	Diana Hovorka		Sydney Garcia		
	Colleen Forristall		Joanne Simons		
7	Jim Barnett	21	Ansley Saba		
	Molly Harding		Kris Abitz		
9	Ella Schwab		Emily Harding		
	Cameron Khuu		Scott Griffith		
	Julie Griffith	22	Anna-May Jacobsen		
10	Seth Westerberg	23	Candy Swick		
12	Phil Kleinschmidt	24	Betsy Chapman		
	Diane Price		Abby Clissold		
	Mary Groninger		Victoria Guenther		
	Bob Kelly		Jane Wright		
	Barbara Zappala		Margaret Benini		
	Nathan Dunn	25	Kirsten Whitford		
13	Kay Steinman	26	Katherine Keeley		
	Caden Tyrna-Leshko		Aislynn Loyless		
14	Kate Keeley		Pam Schweizer		
	Cord Van Nostrand		Rebecca Carlstad		
	Conor O'Neill	28	Leona Huber		
	Ron Vander Schaaf	29	Richard John		
17	Rachel Martin		Branford Adumuah		
	Marcia Brown		Flossie Paul		

• **Anniversaries**

1	Steve & Michelle Fantauzzo
2	Don & Stephie Fleming
4	Cord & Sarah Van Nostrand
6	Jordan Cook & Lynn Riechmann
10	Robert & Cynthia Widman
	Nick & Amy Stine
	Mike & Susan Okey
13	Darrell Cain & Kim Thomas-Cain
20	Doug & Stephanie Tarnowsky
22	Craig & Ellen Gesell
23	Dave & Pamela Lamb
	Dent Davis & Mary Ziegler
	David & Lisa Dunlap
26	Adam & Patricia Martin
27	Carl & Geri Stover
30	Charlie & Marcia Morris

**May
Blessings
from
your church
family**



Cross Connections is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, Volume 40 Issue #5. Please submit articles for the next issue by May 15, 2022. Articles submitted are proofed and edited.



Cross Connections

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